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602 621 177 a man and his wife and his mother, &c. In these circumstances the unit of economic co-operation is smaller than formerly; the families detach themselves more easily and go to join other villages according to their fancy; and the authority of the headman is lessened, since his kinship with them is slighter than in the old-fashioned village.

602 621 A typical kinship unit of the old-fashioned type is described in greater detail in Chap. X. An analysis of the social structure of a number of such communities can be found in Appendix, Table E, for those who have a special interest in kinship problems. The economic system based on these types of local grouping must now be described.

The Village Scene.

621 The huts in a Bemba village fill a circular or oval space in the middle of a ring of garden-beds. Those on the outskirts are built side by side, anything from 3 to 20 ft. apart, each with its door facing to the centre. The huts in the centre are scattered without much determinate plan.[1] When building a village the older men take the good sites such as small eminences or ant-hills, and their huts tend to be larger and better built. Their sons-in-law either build close to them, or else, if there are sufficient young men to form a group of their own, these construct their huts round the open dancing space (*ulubansa*) at one side of the village. The granaries of house-holders living on the outskirts stand in a ring on the garden-beds, the others are placed near their [345] owners' huts. The men's club-houses (*nsaka*) are nothing more than open shelters, roofs supported on uprights, and these are usually built at each end of the village.

342 [177] ● 513 Huts are circular or square in shape,[2] with broad verandas in the case of men of substance. A man and his wife sleep in each hut, but any child over two or three (the weaning age) is sent to sleep with its grandparents, and in an old couple's house it is common to find five or six small children stretched in a row on a mat in front of the fire. Young girls usually sleep in the hut of a young married woman whose husband is temporarily away, or with a widowed woman. They often change their sleeping-

[1] In the larger chiefs' villages the huts are divided into *icitente* (*ifitente*), separate areas under the control of a headman.

[2] The square huts are the more modern variety.

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place each night. Boys build houses for themselves in twos or threes.

Life is lived almost entirely in the open, on the verandas or on the ground in front of each house, and the doors are rarely closed by day. Each villager can see or hear most of what goes on next door in a community of an average size, i.e. of 30 to 50 huts. The Bemba even prepare their food as far as possible in the open—one of the most important sanctions for their particular system of distribution, as we shall see. Strolling through the village late in the afternoon the European will notice little groups of women and girls working together at different tasks. Two women may be grinding side by side at one grindstone, while others have carried their mortars to the door of the same hut and are pounding their grain in unison. On another veranda a group of young girls are shelling nuts, while the leaves for a vegetable stew are being cut and stalked by an older householder. Two grandmothers may be squatting by the fire stirring the porridge, while babies from various households are scrambling in and out of the hut on the lookout for tit-bits. Little girls between 8 and 12 belonging to different families come into the room to beg for something to cook on their own fires, and retire, laughing and talking, to miniature fire-places at the back of the veranda. Young matrons come in and out to borrow pots or a pinch of snuff—there is, in short a constant coming and going of women from hut to hut, while the boys and men of the different families are somewhere in the distance. Even the head of a household, returning from work, will not linger in his hut while cooking is in progress, but will stoop to enter the door, throw his spear silently on the bed and go off to wait elsewhere.

The division of the porridge each evening is an impressive sight in a big hut, and shows at a first glance that the catering far exceeds the limits of a single household. The housewife, probably an old woman, squats on the floor in front of the fire with four or five small eating-baskets beside her. From the great steaming pot on the hearth she takes lump after lump of porridge on the stirrer and slowly, appraisingly, scrapes off the right amount into each receptacle. A ring of younger women and children watch the spoon intently as it hovers a moment above each basket, and later descends to smooth each portion of *ubwali* into round balls. Next the relish is divided into a motley collection

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Elderly and eminent kinsmen, such as a father or grandfather of host or hostess, or the maternal uncle of either, have to be treated with even greater respect. They eat alone, as has been described. When such a person arrives for a few days' visit, a special hut is cleared for him[1] and dishes are sent him neatly covered, which he eats inside the house, calling a small child, usually a grandson, to finish the remains, since an empty platter is a sign of voracity, and is hence *mal-ese*. The manner of bringing the meal is considered specially important. The hostess usually stands at the door of her hut and yells across the village a high-pitched scream of instructions to the child who is carrying the dishes. He is to bring the guest water to wash, to kneel as he hands it, to utter a greeting at the door, and so forth, each sentence ending with that common Bemba phrase *Búsaka! Busaka!*—'elegance' expressed in its duplicative form.

The feeding of female visitors is always a less formal affair, since the whole business of cooking and dispatching dishes (*ukutebeta*) is essentially the woman's way of paying compliments to her male relatives and not to her kinswomen. Most female relatives will be called to eat with the hostess and will even have helped with the preparation of the meal. An older woman must, however, be treated with ceremony. Sometimes she may get a separate basket of porridge, and sometimes the whole company moves to eat on her veranda as though the old lady were playing hostess herself. She then becomes the *mwine* of the dish. Members of the husband's family, as distinct from those of the wife, will usually eat alone. In any case, respected women visitors must always be invited to eat with courtesy by a child, who kneels and says, '*Mukuuni*, they call you to eat.' Age distinctions are very important here. A young married girl told me she could never just shout to an older woman visitor with, 'Come over here, my friend. Hurry! Come quickly! Hunger is hurting! We are waiting to eat,' as she would to a contemporary. Even a 'modern girl' seems punctilious on such points. There are differences, too, in the rules of division of particular dishes. An eminent person might be asked to come to a young woman's hut if meat were being served, but not if in the case of ordinary food. In the hunger period an old

[1] Less distinguished visitors sleep with their relatives, the sleeping quarters allotted carefully in order to avoid breaking the comprehensive incest taboos and in-law avoidances.

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as an abstract sequence of names of which certain have an emotional significance as being a period containing a birthday or Christmas, but the Bemba child is delighted with the appearance of each new crescent and lives a more exciting life during the full moon. He only gradually learns at about 9 or 10 that certain of these moons coincide with particular economic tasks, and later still, as an adult, he is able to recite all the moons in order and to discourse wisely on the whole sequence of the calendar.

Before the coming of the white man, the Bemba had apparently no smaller subdivision of the month than the day. They have now completely adopted the English week, even in remote spots of the country where no one is working for a European. Every native keeps the Christian Sunday, known as the 'day of God', *nshiku ya Mulungu*, from which term the week itself is known as *Mulungu*, the word for God, and the days called the first, second, third, fourth, &c. (*pali cimo, pali cibili*, &c.). The conception of the week has been incorporated in Bemba economic life since it coincides with an adoption of the European rhythm of work and system of payment, and the acceptance for the first time of a time interval which is also a period of work. Wage-earners calculate their weeks of service, and chiefs who formerly called up tribute labourers when they were required now state their dues in precise terms, as for instance three days a week.

The Bemba word for night is *ubushiku*, and for day *akasuba*. In any one day the time is divided into three. Dawn is a fixed event (*bwa:a*), and the period from dawn till midday is known as *ulucelo*. Midday, from 11 till about 3 o'clock, is called *akasuba*, the ordinary word for sun, and the period from 3 to 6, i.e. the time of sunset, is known as *icungulo*. Thus a man who wants to make an appointment with a friend does so to the nearest two or three hours, by telling him to come in the morning, at midday, or in the evening, and when acting as a witness at a legal court can place events in this manner, usually giving additional precision to his statement by raising his arm to point to the exact position of the sun in the sky at the time referred to, e.g. at 11 or 3, and adding, 'The sun was like this' (*kasubefi*).

It is hardly ever necessary to fix time in the night, but the natives speak of 'the middle of the night' (*pakati ka bushiku*) and will also reckon time by the number of turns they have made in their sleep, since these people apparently wake more or less regu-

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larly four or five times a night in order to shift their positions on their hard wood beds.

Thus it can be said that the Bemba method of reckoning time allows them to fix dates to the nearest year, season, month, or nowadays week, but it does not subdivide day and night into equal intervals, and in fact most of their activities do not need to be co-ordinated more closely than to the nearest day or half day. The conception of the equal time interval does not seem to occur to them in the ordinary course of life. Their days and nights are not in fact of equal length as ours are, with our independence of seasonal changes in light, dark, and temperature, and our regular routine of work. Bemba rise at 5 a.m. in the hot weather, but come reluctantly from their huts at 8 or even later in the cold season, and their working day is fixed accordingly. Meals are timed to the nearest two hours rather than to the minute, and night begins at any time from 8 o'clock on a chilly dark evening to midnight or later when the moon is full, and the people are tempted to stay out in the open. Nor does the work-time interval which dominates our activities and calculations exist for them. We, after all, can hardly conceive of time except in terms of energy expenditure and, to many of us, a fixed money value as well. But the Bemba in his unspecialized society does different tasks daily and a different amount of work each day. The diary of men's and women's activities given in Table E shows that in Kampamba the men were employed on five quite separate occupations (hoeing, hunting, chasing locusts, fencing, carrying, &c.) in the course of ten days, and at Kasaka, though the main work was branch lopping, yet various ritual observances, visits from friends or Europeans, interrupted the daily routine constantly. Domestic needs tie the women to certain daily tasks in this, as in other communities, but even then their garden work varies greatly from day to day. The working hours also change in what seems to us a most erratic manner. In fact I do not think the people ever conceive of such periods as the month, week, or day in relation to regular work at all. The major agricultural tasks have to coincide with certain seasons and moons, and that is all. A man says he has to cut trees between such-and-such climatic changes, but not that he has so many hours of work to get through, and daily work, which has become from habit almost a physiological necessity to many Europeans, only occurs at certain times of the year. The whole bodily rhythm